

BOOK NOTICE

LAWRENCE R. HEANEY and JACINTO C. REGALADO, JR. 1998. **Vanishing Treasures of the Philippine Rain Forest.** (ISBN 0-914868-19-5, pbk), The Field Museum, Roosevelt Road at Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, Illinois 60605-2496. \$24 88 Pp.

This book "was published by The Field Museum, Chicago, on the occasion of "Vanishing Treasures of the Philippine Rain Forest" and "Voyage a Nation: The Philippines" -two exhibitions celebrating the biological diversity and culture of the Philippines."

As a semi-popular work, the book provides a wonderful introduction to the diversity, origins and prospects for survival of the highly endemic biota of the Philippines. Through highly illustrative examples, and fantastic photographs, the reader is led through some of the most striking elements of the remaining few extant forests. Most importantly, the balance of botanical and zoological examples of endangered taxa, and the economic consequences of their habitats' destruction, are illustrated in a practical way previously not seen in popular books. Every reader will be impressed with the extent of forest destruction, the catastrophic effects of deforestation on rural human populations, and mass extinction of species that were locally common in the past. While geographic and species coverages are slanted toward the Visayan and Mindanao regions of the country, examples are provided from all major faunistic areas in a well-balanced manner, complete with historical and present-day statistics. I have seen no better "coffee table" book that clearly and succinctly explains the horrific consequences of forest destruction, endangerment of species, and degradation of the environment. The case for the Philippines as the hottest of the "hot spots" is made in a striking manner. While I disagree that the Philippines is "megadiverse," (sensu Colombia or Brasil), it is certainly "mega-endemic" and the state of its forest cover is akin only to the that of Madagascar or Haiti. After serious reading of this book, I can scarcely imagine anyone who would not be ready to support research in basic systematics, conservation biology and sustainable development programs in the country. It is a book that should be on the bookshelf of every field biologist, conservationist and environmental enthusiast.—*John J. Pipoly III.*